



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

ugly and faded, with sin dust for morning dew. So Nature and the soul—re-acting each on the other—bring us in the end to a fuller consciousness of each ; and at length, in a more subtle blending, to a fuller consciousness of human life and the world it lives in.

Thus it is by strange devices—descriptions, presentations, explanations, by the subtle connotations and subtle interactions,—we come at last to the familiar consciousness of a fair world, peopled as of old with living men and women, and sounding with the world old voices “eternal passion—eternal pain.” And since these souls have been embodied in living men and women, the question comes to us, who have yet to demonstrate the “liveability of life,” what message do they bring to us of its wise conduct? Through the “thousand blended notes” of their many voices, there rises clear and strong an overtone of Browning’s own soul. It is a trumpet call to life. It is Life he sings. Life in its gamut, sounding through every experience high and low. Experience—to forge one’s soul sword-fashion, by conscious living—that is the great desideratum. The act, however mean, in which one’s soul leaps highest—that is “life height.” The intensest moment is the greatest. There is a wide field for action. Browning has set back the boundaries of life that the soul may run full course. Liberally he has endowed his creations ; and then in his generosity, he has made the one unpardonable sin niggardliness of spirit. Prudence is with him high crime. So, if one must condense his message into a single sentence, one can do no better than make use of Stevenson’s motto :

“Acts may be forgiven a man ; but God himself cannot forgive the hanger back.”

In summing up the points of this chapter, we see that Browning is a dramatist of the subject. His task, the portrayal of the soul, forces him to interpret as well as present the man and his acts, and it is to this that the peculiarities of his style and structure are directly traceable. To this also is due the material of which his drama is made. The mood and its impulse corresponds to the deed and the doing of it ; for struggle we have opposing points of view. Lastly, we see that in his hands the drama, as an art form, suffers strain ; and though his interpretation of the soul is cramped

by the exigencies of the drama, yet in one way or another his end—and the end of all drama—is attained. By highways and byways, these souls slide into the consciousness of the reader, and become for him living personalities.

CAROLINE L. SPARROW.

Richmond, Va.

#### AN EARLY ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF *MISS SARA SAMPSON.*

A superficial examination of English criticism in the early period of the importation of the German drama into England yields the impression that Lessing was regarded as the greatest of German dramatic authors. Henry McKenzie, “The Man of Feeling,” allotted him a position of prominence in a “Critical Account of the German Theater,” read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1790, while contemporary magazines and reviews persistently honored him with the distinction of being the Sophocles or Shakespeare of Germany.

A more careful examination of these encomiums reveals the fact that they were but the hasty and slavish repetition of contemporary German criticism. The name Shakespeare in this connection is undeniably only the belated echo of the similar use in Germany. The German dramatist was commonly called Shakespeare-Lessing after the first production of *Emilia Galotti*. We must also bear in mind that the term Shakespeare applied to German authors by English critics does not signify much ; Lessing, Schiller, Goethe, and Kotzebue were successively hailed as the Shakespeare of Germany.

The fate of Lessing’s dramas on the English stage does not attest any unusual popularity. To be sure *Minna von Barnhelm* has the distinction of being the first German drama to be produced in England. Fifteen performances at the Haymarket Theater in 1786, however, are not indicative of a due appreciation of Germany’s masterpiece of comedy by London theater-goers. The fate of *Emilia Galotti* at Drury Lane in 1794 is even more pathetic. In spite of elaborate *mise-en-scène* and the heroic efforts of Mrs. Siddons and Kemble,

the adaptation perished after a run of four nights and was never resuscitated. Raspe's translation of *Nathan der Weise* in 1781 met with undeserved ridicule, while Taylor's masterful rendition in 1805 passed practically unnoticed.

It has hitherto been supposed that *Miss Sara Sampson*, Germany's first "bürgerliches Trauerspiel," for which so many English sources have been suggested, was not translated in England. It is a well-known fact that an American version appeared in 1789. William Barton in his *Memoirs of David Rittenhouse*, cites, as an evidence of the American philosopher's familiarity with German, that he translated from the German of Lessing a tragedy called *Lucia Sampson*. It may be of some interest to know that an early English version does exist, although not in book form. The *Lady's Magazine* or *Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex* published in 1799 and 1800, in monthly instalments, a complete translation with the title of *The Fatal Elopement*. The contributor was a certain Eleanor H . . . of Twickenham, whose identity the writer has been unable to establish. Her only other claim to literary distinction is a translation of Kotzebue's *Die Corsen*, published in 1800.

It is easily seen why Miss H. transformed the title. *The Fatal Elopement* was likely to prove far more interesting to the fair sex, to whose use and amusement this magazine was "solely appropriated" than the unsuggestive *Miss Sara Sampson*. It is not so clear, however, why she took the same liberty with the *dramatis personæ*. Mellefont and Marwood alone are preserved as in the German version. Miss H.'s freedom with the original is not confined to the title and the *dramatis personæ*. The text is materially abridged. The division into speeches is followed faithfully, but the dialogue is curtailed by paraphrasing, especially in the longer passages. The translation is accurate and idiomatic in the easy colloquial parts, but where Lessing rises above the mediocrity of commonplace dialogue to impassioned and poetic diction, the translator fails utterly to reproduce the style of the original. Some errors in translation are apparent, but the English is uniformly smooth and, to say the least, grammatical.

It is of course impossible to state whether *The Fatal Elopement* was favorably received by the

subscribers to the *Lady's Magazine*. There are no means at our disposal of ascertaining whether or not the circulation of the magazine was increased by the publication of this tragedy. At any rate the succeeding numbers contain no communications from approving or disapproving readers. The only possible indication of an interest in Lessing awakened by this tragedy was the publication of a few of Lessing's epigrams in the December number 1799.

GEORGE M. BAKER.

Yale University.

## STUDIES IN MIDDLE FRENCH.

Returning to Darmesteter and Hatzfeld's *Tableau de la Langue française au xvi<sup>e</sup> siècle* in "Le Seizième Siècle en France" (7th edition, "revue et corrigée") after a study of the language of earlier centuries, some statements therein struck me as manifestly misleading. It seems worth while to call attention to a few of these, because this work is still so much used as a textbook.

### I.

#### *Il* and *Ce*.

§ 158—"L'impersonnel *ce* s'emploie dans la vieille langue et encore au seizième siècle plus volontiers que *il*, qui tend à dominer dans la langue moderne : 'C'estoit raison qu'il fust récompensé de sa longue patience' (Marg., *Hept.*). Quand *ce* viendra que seray mort (Mont.)." It is true that in Old French where the personal pronoun, after the genius of the Latin, was but sparingly expressed, the comparatively frequent occurrence of *ce* attracts the attention, but as the language more and more definitely formulated itself and the personal pronoun became more regularly expressed, the frequent use of *il* where to-day *ce* would be used, is striking. To be sure, where no standard was yet formed and grammarians were an unknown quantity, *ce* was also *vice-versa* used where *il* would be used to-day. Yet even so, *il* always prevailed, and to such an extent that after reading such a writer of the thirteenth century as Brunetto Latini, whose sub-